

IRELAND:  
HER LANDLORDS, HER PEOPLE, AND  
THEIR HOMES.

BY AN IRISH LANDLORD.

*French, C*

DUBLIN:  
GEORGE HERBERT, 117, GRAFTON STREET.  
1860.

Dublin :  
Printed by Pattison Jolly,  
22, Essex-st. West.

309.415  
F887iPREFACE.

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IN the following Letters I have stated my own convictions, the result of some research, and some practical experience, relative to the present and future interests of the Irish people. Having lived amongst them, and witnessed the scenes of misery consequent on the late famine, it naturally occurred to me to inquire how it came to pass that a people, nurtured in the midst of civilisation, and surrounded by the evidences of luxury and refinement, should yet be themselves uneducated, unrefined, and destitute of the comforts and appendages of civilised life. The problem of our national existence had never yet been solved, probably because the solution was looked for in the political, not the social condition of the Irish people. Men believed that the Irish must be prosperous, free, and enlightened, because they were admitted to the benefits of a liberal constitution ; forgetful that the true secret of happiness and independence consists in the development of a moral and intellectual character, and in the secure possession and enjoyment of those material guarantees which entitle the individual to the

rank and privileges of a citizen. This rank, these privileges, I would claim for the great majority of my fellow-countrymen. I believe that as yet they do not possess them, that they have hitherto been dependent, destitute of capital and resources, and therefore without the elements of national existence. The history of the Irish nation has yet to be written. That nation, the essence of which is a great conservative body of citizens, attached to the country by a permanent bond, has yet to be created. And this work can be done without any great social change, or any violation of the rights of property, but simply by an adherence to the dictates of honour and equity, and by a practical recognition of the obligations and duties of Christian legislators. It will be done, not by exquisites and men of ultra-refinement, not by pseudo-philanthropists and formalists, dealers in conventionalities and small wares, but by those who bring an unshaken integrity, a warm heart and generous spirit, and an indomitable energy to the work ;—by men who have shared the joys and sympathised with the sorrows of their poorer brethren—who have sat beside their hearth, beneath their roof-tree, and learned by practical experience the lessons which lie hidden beneath the veil of our humanity, and within the recesses of the human breast.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE condition of Ireland and of her people has long been a subject of interest to the patriot and the statesman. Often has the question been asked, How does it come to pass that a country, blessed with a fertile soil, a temperate climate, and great natural resources, and closely connected with the most wealthy and civilized empire in the world, should yet have been so long neglected and unimproved ? Why have its natural capabilities been so little developed, while the stream of English capital, poured forth on other lands, has been diverted from its shores ? But, above all, why is it that a people gifted with many natural endowments—with a vivid imagination, a versatile genius, and with great quickness of perception and aptitude for learning ; a people who have long been subject to the laws, and partakers in the benefits of the British constitution, should yet have derived little advantage apparently from their contact with a civilized, industrious, and enterprising race ; and while destitute of capital or material resources, should too often exhibit the characteristics of the uneducated barbarian (in their recklessness, intemperance, and improvidence) ? Why

should they, born beneath the ægis of British freedom, evince often a discontented spirit, a disloyalty and lawlessness which appears inexplicable, and difficult to be accounted for in the case of those who (it is presumed, at least) have been admitted to the full privileges of citizenship ? These are important questions ; and on their solution will depend the future welfare of this country. Is there a cause sufficient to account for this strange anomaly ; for the waywardness and apparent ingratitude, for the unformed character and rude habits of a people, who are connected by the closest ties with the most free and enlightened community in the world ? Yes, there is a cause ; and the object of the following letters is to disclose, if possible, the true source of the evils of Ireland, to trace their results, and to propose the remedy.

Many who have hitherto dilated upon the evils which so long affected the condition of the Irish, have believed that they resulted partly from political causes, from the want of certain franchises or privileges ; partly from these innate defects of the national character, which must always operate to preclude any lasting improvement. Now, on reviewing the past history of our country, we do find that although the concession of certain rights, and the removal of disabilities affecting a large portion of the community, was undoubtedly a great relief, and tended to the ad-

vancement of the people, yet the social condition of the Irish was little changed ; the great characteristics of their existence remained unaltered, and they were still destitute of the essential elements of nationality. Nor again, could their inferior condition be wholly attributed to any peculiar inherent defects in the people themselves, to a want of intelligence, to a natural slothfulness and recklessness, or a practical denial of all moral responsibility ? Elsewhere, in former ages, the Celtic race has contended for supremacy on the theatre of the world. They were the advanced guard of those nations who afterwards triumphed on the ruins of Rome, and under her empire they attained to a high degree of civilization. Elsewhere the Irish, when removed from the influences of their native soil, have displayed those virtues of persevering industry, of energy, and enterprise, and self-control, which fitted them to be the pioneers of future nations in the untrodden wilds of America. And even in his own country, when stimulated to exertion by a generous and liberal treatment, the Irishman has often proved that he can rival the Saxon in those qualities which are held to be the peculiar characteristics of the English race.

I do not here seek to extenuate the faults or palliate the misdeeds of my fellow-countrymen ; nor would I throw a false colouring over defects which undoubt-

edly do exist. The truth must be told, whatever may be the result. And if we would reform a people, we must prove to them that the necessity for such reform does actually exist. But while I acknowledge much that is reprehensible ; while I lament the lawlessness, the fierce hatred, the frequent outbursts of intemperate rage, I still do affirm that the vices with which the national character has been branded are not indigenous, but that they arise more from the circumstances of their condition than from any inherent depravity. In fact, as with the land, so with its people ; the soil was good, but it had been neglected ; weeds had been allowed to spring up and choke the natural growth. None can deny that the Irish are warm-hearted ; easily won by sympathy and kindness ; grateful—attached to their family and their native land ; sanguine and hopeful even under adverse circumstances. Such a race, if they had been governed with liberality and firmness, and subjected to a system by which their natural good qualities might be called into action, and their bad habits repressed, would have long since achieved a proud position, and asserted a high rank among the nations. But when their rulers, adopting an unjust and suicidal policy, restricted them to a condition of vassalage and dependence, and thus perpetuated their degradation ; when they condemned them to a precarious existence, and denied that hope in

the future, which is the incentive to persevering exertion ; when they relegated the people to the lowest class, and thus practically forbade them to become capitalists, how could they expect that their dependants should display the virtues of freemen, or that serfs, without any definite interest in the country, should be industrious, provident, and loyal citizens. No ; the same system and the same training will produce similar results in every age, and in every part of the world—whether among the peasants of Ireland or the ryots of Hindostan. Let the Anglo-Saxon be subjected during a short term to the same treatment as that which paralysed the energies of the Celt, and he will be equally reckless, discontented, and improvident. The great laws by which mankind are governed never alter. Treat men as serfs ; deprive them of the highest incentives to action, the springs of a noble ambition, and you will have them ignorant, insincere, and demoralized. Treat them with justice and liberality ; recognize their legitimate rights ; open up to them the path to wealth and independence, and you will soon see light shining out of darkness, and a people long oppressed shaking off the fetters which bound them—shaking off their apathy and sloth, and aspiring to the dignity of freemen and citizens.

Again, the misfortunes of our country have been attributed to absentee landlords, and to the want of

capital, which would supply the means of permanent improvements. Now, as regards the first objection, it is certain that while the masses of the Irish people are dependent on a certain class for support and protection ; while they do not possess the means of acquiring independence themselves, but must look to their landlords for employment and subsistence, the absence of that class from the country, and from the proper sphere of their duties, is a great and serious evil. The magnitude, however, of that evil, is chiefly owing to the insecure condition of the people. Rescue them from that condition, and the absence of the landed proprietors will be a matter comparatively of slight importance. If the owner of the soil should take care to leave behind him a sufficient substitute in a population attached to the land, associated with him in proprietary rights, who would improve and cultivate his estate with the energy and perseverance of a master, he would do much to alleviate, at least, if not to remove altogether, those evils which his non-residence must necessarily entail upon a community dependent on him alone for the means of existence. Let me not be misunderstood ; I hold, that in a country like Ireland, the residence and active co-operation of a refined and intelligent gentry is most essential, in order to further the education and improvement of the people. But that a people should be dependent

upon them to such an extent as to be affected in their highest interests by their absence, this is a proof of a radical defect in our social system. No system is sound which subjects the welfare, even the existence of the body of the people, to chance, to the caprice of a privileged and irresponsible class. In the present state of society, it is undoubtedly the duty of landlords, a solemn obligation entailed upon them, to protect and cherish their dependants, as long as they choose to retain them in a state of vassalage. They must reside and give employment to those who, by proper encouragement, would find ample occupation on their own farms, and accumulate capital. But who is to compel landlords to expend their revenues on their estates, and to reside at home? In a word, absenteeism is a serious evil, while the people continue in a state of pupillage. But we should look forward to a time when they may be emancipated from this anomalous condition of dependence and insecurity, and advanced to a higher position, where they may hope, by their own exertions, to realize a competence. It is not so much the want of a resident proprietary as of a "resident" people, which has been the curse of Ireland—of a people attached to their country by enduring ties, who possessed a home and an interest therein, and were identified with its institutions.

As regards capital—if we understand by that term merely the monied resources of the people—there has been hitherto a deficiency in that respect. But there are other things of great importance, which we would consider as capital, although, perhaps, they may not be classed under that head by our political economists. The intelligence and educated skill of a people—their habits of industry—the character acquired by long training—the spirit of independence handed down from their ancestors—all that which may be made available for the development of their natural resources ;—these constitute a capital more precious than the mines of Peru. Material wealth may be wasted ; the solid structures reared by the toil of generations may be swept away ; the sands of the desert may entomb the pyramid ; the grass wave over the marble mausoleum ;—but that glorious heritage which a people possess who have been nurtured in freedom, and trained to habits of self-reliance, can never be reft from them, but must ultimately insure to them prosperity and empire. Wherever they may steer their course, whether to the burning plains of India or the rugged shores of America ; wherever they fix their abode, they will assert their supremacy, and stamp their impress, their idiosyncrasy, on the soil. The character of the fierce and conquering Roman, of the Norman, and the Anglo-Saxon race, may be read dis-

tinctly impressed upon the memorials which attest their indomitable energy and persevering toil. They were no soft, effeminate race, but stern, practical men, who have thus worked out their own independence, and fulfilled a noble mission on earth. Let us follow their example. Let us not forget that riches alone are not capital ; but the true wealth of nations consists in an educated, intelligent, high-minded people, who are capable of calling forth and turning to good account the natural capabilities and resources of their country. We want this capital in Ireland ; we want a people trained to the practical duties of life, schooled by experience, whose skill and reasoning powers have been developed ; give us these—give the opportunity and the incentives to exertion—and we shall soon find the rest. Ireland will soon possess material wealth, created by the enterprise and industry of her children, and will no longer demand from the stranger a precarious and transitory relief.

If, then, those causes which I have mentioned, namely, the peculiarities of race, the want of political power, the want of monied capital, and of resident landlords, are not sufficient in themselves to account for the anomalous condition of the Irish people, it remains to consider whether there may not be some deeper root of evil, which is not a result but itself a cause, the origin “ *fons et origo malorum.* ” This

original source of calamity we shall, I think, find in the radical defects of our social system. According to that system, which emanated from the conquest of the country, the mass of the people were reduced to a state of vassalage and dependence under the lords of the soil, who possessed unlimited power, and to whom the authority of the state was delegated. From the period of the Norman invasion until the present time, the destinies of the Irish were committed to those who had inherited the privileges and institutions of the dominant race. The landlords were the medium of communication between the state and the people, and represented, in fact, the ruling power. Consequently, they were bound by their position to fulfil the duties attached to property, and to exercise the functions of statesmanship. They were bound to educate and train up those placed under their charge, to afford them the means of improvement, and thus, by degrees, to make them capitalists connected with property, and qualified to be citizens of the state. Their policy should have been to eradicate the vestiges of the conquest, to fuse together the discordant elements, to unite all classes without distinction of caste or creed, by a common bond, and thus to inaugurate a solid basis of nationality. This was their mission, the great work which they ought to have performed as the guardians of the people, and the representatives of the power of

England. But they did not do so ; they allowed centuries to pass away, and left the masses still loose on the soil, and alienated from all real property—still uneducated ; without a home ; without any guarantees of existence ; insecure and uncertain of their future ; and in that uncertainty and that insecurity we discern the true cause, the original source of the evils of Ireland. Deprived of the great incentives to labour, the people became indolent and apathetic ; left without any certain hope, they were reckless and improvident ; and finally, being destitute of property, and without an abiding interest in the state, they were discontented, lawless, and disaffected. What advantages were political privileges to men who were socially enslaved ? What great boon was an extension of franchise to those who were struggling to gain the first elements of existence, who wanted the qualification, and therefore were incapable of possessing the rights of citizenship ? For a proletarian class, that is, one bound to the country by no tie except the mere accident of birth, must be dependent, and therefore cannot rank amongst the citizens. This lesson, then, we extract from the past history of Ireland, that a people whose social position is insecure, can never rise to independence or to real nationality. While they possess no stake or guarantee ; while “a scripti glebæ,” they own no capital or property in

the country, they can make no progress, or initiate any real permanent improvement. And therefore, after centuries had elapsed, the Irishman of the nineteenth century, previous to the famine, differed little in his habits and the characteristics of his existence from his rude, uncivilised forefathers. Like them he lived in a wretched habitation, conversant with filth and misery ; like them he was careless and improvident, dependent for subsistence on the casual provision of a single year. Thus the stream of time rolled on, and bore with it the relics of former days, and the unsubstantial fabrics of disappointed ambition. And age succeeded age, and often was the soil of Ireland the battle-field where Norman and Saxon, and loyalists and revolutionists, contended for the supremacy. But the storms which raged over the heads of the humble occupiers of the soil affected them not, and the shifting of the political scenes left them unaltered. Still they existed—miserable, abject, until the great catastrophe, to which all had ultimately tended, arrived. A great population had accumulated upon the land, from whence alone they derived their subsistence. Destitute of capital—without any heritage or wealth derived from their ancestors (for insecurity had produced this obvious and fatal result), they were wholly dependent on a single crop for the means of support. That crop failed in one night : As by the breath of

some destroying angel, their resources were blasted, and the nation became bankrupt. Then at once the hollowness of that system was apparent, which had demoralised a people by restricting their energies, and closing the path to independence and prosperity. Then the bubble burst, the unsubstantial fabric collapsed, and at length the truth was revealed, which had been concealed during centuries. A population long existing on the verge of destitution, were deprived of their last hope, and in their ruin they involved those who, occupied with their own selfish cares, had never sought their advancement, or sympathised with their misfortunes. Henceforth they must learn by experience, that the laws of God cannot be transgressed with impunity ; that sooner or later punishment will be inflicted on those who have wasted their opportunities, neglected their manifest duty, and allowed a people committed to their trust to linger on in misery and ignorance, while, with their natural powers undeveloped, and devoid of resources, they had lapsed into a condition in which their ultimate ruin was inevitable. Surely, when we look back on the dreary records of Irish history, we may well apply to those infatuated rulers the words of the poet—

*“Tunc crassos transisse dies, lucemque palustrem,  
Et sibi tunc serò vitam ingenuère relictam.”*

Now the crisis has passed away, and the vivifying light

has burst forth through the chaos. Ireland is awakening to a new birth. Her people are at length beginning to understand what are the real exigencies of their position, and to lay the bases of nationality. That nationality can only consist in the possession by the people of an assured position, of a home and settlement in the land, in the full enjoyment of the blessings of freedom, and the privileges of citizenship. Once more let me repeat, it is social, not political reform which we want. We want, not that our people should have empty votes, and unsubstantial honours ; but that they should be free ;—free by virtue of their moral character and intellectual power, free, as no longer aliens in the land, but associated with property, possessed of a definite interest, and elevated to the rank of citizens. Once they have attained to that position, they will be prepared to exercise calmly and dispassionately that political power to which they are entitled under the British constitution. It is in order to call attention to these important facts connected with the social constitution of our people, that I have written the following letters, being confident that the system which I advocate is consistent with the fundamental principles of statesmanship, and with the requirements of a civilization based on Christianity, and that, if rightly carried out, it would ultimately establish the welfare and prosperity of Ireland.

## LETTER I.

### SOCIAL CONDITION.

I HAVE been anxious during some time to lay before my fellow-countrymen the result of a little thought and a little experience relative to the condition and prospects of the Irish people. I think this is a fitting time to bring forward the subject. Perhaps we have already waited too long. Time is slipping by—generations are passing away—and yet the great questions which involve actually the independence, the social position, the true national existence of the people, are still unsettled. Matters of comparatively trifling import are brought prominently forward, and made the watchwords of party, while those subjects on which the present prosperity and future prospects of Ireland must depend, are but slightly alluded to, or passed over. Let the people understand their own business—what they want, and what they ought to get. Let them know that it must depend chiefly upon themselves, on their own intelligence and exertions, whether they shall ever attain to that position which is alone compatible

with national independence, with progress and citizenship. When the intelligence of a people has been awakened, and directed to one object ; when they are united, and determined to obtain those rights which reason and justice would demand, then they may rest assured that their wishes will shortly be accomplished. It is want of union, want of steadiness of purpose, want of persevering energy, which has hitherto caused the weakness of the Celt ; while the opposite qualities constitute the strength of the Saxon. When we know our deficiencies, we can correct them ; when we know our real evils, we may be able to devise a sufficient remedy. Let the public decide whether what I say is true or not. If true, it will stand, whatever the world may think ; if false, it will fall to the ground.

The case of the Irish people is a simple one. Owing to various causes, they had, until a late period, possessed no security, no definite settlement or tenure in the land. Consequently, they had no opportunity of acquiring that fund of wealth, that heritage created by the toil of generations, which must be the sole basis of freedom and national existence. They had not that stake in the country—that permanent interest which is the guarantee and pledge of citizenship. Therefore, their political rights, derived from a loose and uncertain social contract, were of little

value ;—their guarantees, not only of freedom, but even of existence, of a home or settlement in their native land, were undefined and ill assured ; and the natural result was, that—unconnected with real property—they evinced the character, the reckless, improvident habits which such a state of things must engender. Without capital, without a fund of realised wealth, they could not aspire to the position of free and enlightened citizens. Political enfranchisement brought therefore to them little alleviation from their evils. Acts of Parliament and Emancipation Bills will not create a nation, or make them independent. A people who have no ties, no permanent interest in their country, are not citizens of the state. They may possess votes and franchises, but these things will not preserve them from vassalage. Politically free, they are socially enslaved. The picture which Alfieri drew of the Italians might equally serve to describe the Irish—

“ *Servi, ma servi ognor frementi.*”

Such was, I believe, the condition of the Irish people until the great famine of 1846. That visitation demonstrated clearly the false and insecure basis upon which the national existence rested. A people without capital, dependent upon a single crop, saw their last stake swept away, their forlorn hope destroyed, in a single night. They had nothing left to

fall back upon, therefore they lapsed at once into the abyss of ruin and starvation. What a comment was this upon the patriotism of our statesmen, of those who had long directed the energies of our people. Were they actually ignorant of this fact, that all the glories of the British constitution were nothing to a people while their very existence, their right of settlement in the land, was yet undetermined ; that repeal of the Union, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, were matters of slight importance while the great question, the life insurance of a nation, was unsettled ; that political freedom must follow from social ; but it availed little to those who owned not the title or the privileges of citizens ? Political power may be bestowed on those who, like the Roman citizens of the Empire, are mere dependent serfs ; but those who possess a solid interest in the state, have a title to independence which cannot be gainsayed. What was Magna Charta to the Saxon race, when trampled beneath the iron tread of the Norman barons ? They could not appeal to it ; they derived no benefit from it, until, step by step, by hard industry and persevering endurance, they had gained that position in which their freedom could not be longer refused. And this is the work which the Irish people should do—this is the position which they must gain. That work, by which a people

can be elevated to a real, independent, national existence, cannot be accomplished in a moment. It will require the earnest co-operation of all classes—it will task the intelligence, the mental power, the inherent qualities of the race. By a steady perseverance, by a due appreciation of their real wants and exigencies, they will ultimately succeed. In my next letters I will state briefly the measures and course of policy which might, I trust, lead to this result, and inaugurate a prosperous future for our country.

In order to prevent the recurrence of such evils as those of which the late famine was the culminating point, the closing act of a long tragedy, it is essential that the radical defects in our social system which hitherto obstructed the progress of the people should be removed. It is absolutely necessary that the Irish people should be elevated to that position of security, comfort, and independence, in which, having a permanent interest in their country, they may fulfil the part of citizens, and arrive at a higher development of their moral and intellectual powers. In a word, they must become capitalists—that is, they must possess, in their educated faculties, in their intelligence, in a certain realized fund of wealth, those resources which will secure them in future against any sudden unforeseen calamity, and placed them in a secure harbour of safety.

And they will have to enter on a new career, where, by works performed and deeds done, they may afford an evidence to the world that they are resolved to create, by energy and perseverance, a real, distinct, nationality. For let us remember that mankind will value us not according to our own estimation, but according to the substantial proofs which they may see of life and energy. No poems of Ossian and traditions of old kings will avail in this practical age. The world requires facts, not fictions. Show us your title deeds. What have you done?—Are the monuments of your genius, your enterprise, your persevering toil, scattered broadcast through your land? If you have these, you may take rank among the nations. If not, despite all the bards of Fingal—despite all sentimental talk about Erin's glories—you have yet to enter on the career of independent national existence. A people have not emerged from a state of pupillage and assumed the “toga virilis,” until, educated and refined, they have obtained a sure footing in their native land.

The sooner that all classes understand their position and relative duties the better. It is the duty of the people of Ireland to cast off the evil habits, the sloth and improvidence of their fathers, and to aspire to that condition in which they will be, not in name only, but in fact, citizens of the state. It is the duty

of the higher classes, who possess an influence, and guide the destinies of their fellow-countrymen, to remove any obstructions which have hitherto operated to depress the people, to prevent their temporal advancement, and the development of their natural resources. They must show an example of disinterestedness, of freedom from vulgar prejudices, of liberality and strict justice in their dealings, otherwise it will be hard to eradicate the seeds, long implanted, of suspicion and mistrust. They should rise superior to all sectarian distinctions, and learn to regard all Irishmen, whatever may be their race or creed, as the members of one commonwealth, which may hereafter take rank among the foremost nations of the earth. For I believe that there are resources yet undeveloped in our country and its people—there are germs of future excellence not matured, which may lead us confidently to expect such a result. Only let us reject all quacking and superficial remedies, and look for a treatment accordant with the requirements of civilized man. Deep ploughing is what we want; as with our soil, so with our people; no raising of the skin, no mere grazing the surface. Dig deep, get rid of the weeds, turn up the subsoil; beneath that parasitical growth there is the material of wealth; beneath the habits and vices engendered by servitude, there are natural good qualities and capabilities long obscured,

which give promise of future strength and power. But let it be well understood, that “to whom much is given, from them much will be demanded.” The landlords of Ireland are possessed of extensive privileges. As absolute owners of the soil, they are, in fact, the arbiters of the happiness and prosperity of its inhabitants, who derive their subsistence chiefly from that soil. As matters stand at present, until some distinct provision shall be made to secure the occupiers (who constitute the great body of the Irish people), the owners of the land may grant them that security which is the grand basis of improvement—and thus stimulate their exertions, and lead them to independence. Or, on the other hand, they have the power (if they chose to exercise it) of denying all security, consequently, of stopping the sources of national prosperity, and condemning a people to perpetual stagnation and ultimate ruin. Whether the sources of this absolute power are legitimate or not, it matters little, provided the duties which such an authority entails are well performed. But the proofs of its legitimacy are manifested by the wellbeing, the affection and loyalty of the people. Will the government, as exercised by the landlords of Ireland, stand this test? Few will question right or title, if it can be proved by undisputed facts that the great privileges of the lords of the soil have hitherto been used to promote

the real well-being of the people. Since, then, so much depends upon the manner in which landlords understand and discharge the responsibilities of their position, I would endeavour to clearly define what I believe to be the rights which have devolved upon the Irish proprietors, and the duties consequent thereon.

## LETTER II.

### LANDLORDS.

THE landlords of Ireland possess a great, almost despotic, power. Living in a country where there are no manufactures, and where, consequently, the population are chiefly dependent on the land for their employment and subsistence, they hold, as it were, the issues of the national life. They can awaken the energy, the industry, and enterprise of millions, and direct them to a great, a noble result ;—or they may seal up the fountains, allow the streams to stagnate, and condemn a people to physical discomfort, to apathetic sloth, to mental inaction and sterility. As lords of the soil, they inherit an authority which, I hesitate not to say, is (if wrongly exercised) inconsistent with the happiness, the social development, and even with the independent existence of the people. But as the power is great, so also is the responsibility. Men must now prove their right to their possessions, and to exclusive privileges, by a better title than mere conquest. All legitimate power is based on the willing obedience of those who derive from it security and

support. The landlord is to his dependants the representative of the government. If he act well towards his people, they will be contented, orderly, and well-disposed ; if he is arbitrary and unjust, they will be indolent, discontented, and disaffected. Such are the powers of the lords of the soil—let us now define their duties.

The present generation of Irish landlords have succeeded to no small share of trouble and responsibility. A heavy task had devolved upon them, owing to the negligence and improvidence of their ancestors. There was a long arrear, a long account to be settled with the Irish people. During centuries they had been forbidden to occupy the land of their fathers, to create a home, an inheritance, therein. They were allowed to exist in a condition little better than the beasts of the earth ; to vegetate, without any security in the present or hope for the future. Consequently, their intellect was degraded, and they were not accessible to the influences of true civilization. For the first step to improvement is, when the people are elevated to an independent position. Added to all this, there was the rivalry of caste and religion, the old enmity between Celt and Saxon, between Roman Catholic and Protestant. Fraud and injustice was legalized, and acts of oppression which all true Christians repudiate and abhor, were perpetrated under the mask of religion. It was necessary at once to heal

these dissensions, to introduce a better order of things, to elevate the people to a condition where, connected with property, they might possess an interest in the state, and thus attain to the dignity and privileges of citizens. The Irish landlord is placed by Providence in a position of peculiar trust. Placed often in an antagonistic position, he must eradicate the old grudge, the ancient "*vendetta*." Let him see that he gives a good account of his stewardship. He is bound to provide for the material comfort and independence, for the social happiness, for the intellectual and moral advancement of those who have been committed to his charge. Let him discharge his obligations, not alone to his kindred, but to the state, and as a legislator, provide for the wants of the people. That man does not perform this duty who wantonly degrades a population from the condition of small farmers to that of hireling labourers, dependent on daily wages ; or who drives them forth from the soil as indolent and irreclaimable, before one effort has been made to call forth their latent powers, to educate, and rescue them from barbarism. Men do not fulfil a duty by avoiding it, and the actual presence of a population dependent upon us for their improvement and happiness must entail an obligation from which we have no right to shrink. It is our business to reform and improve them, by the right application of those means which God has given us.

How, then, shall the objects which we have defined be carried out, and the material prosperity of the people be established, while at the same time their intelligence and moral power is developed? In the first place, let the owner of the soil give to the occupier that boon which is essential to his prosperity—namely, security. Let there be a fair equitable contract, clear and well-defined, which may stimulate the tenant to invest his capital in lasting improvements, to expend his industry and intelligence where he may be sure of ample remuneration. This alone will give him energy and a heart to improve, and pave the way to his social enfranchisement. With security he will be free; without it, despite Magna Charta, he is a serf. This principle should first be well established. Let it be once understood that every honest, industrious man—every Irishman, no matter what his creed or profession may be—shall be entitled to a fair tenure, and to reasonable compensation for the toil and capital which he may have expended. Let the people be thus encouraged to settle down, to acquire property, and create a home in their native land, and their progress to independence, to wealth, and to a real national existence, will be insured. Thus will their intelligence be called forth, habits of persevering industry, of fore-thought and self-denial, will be formed, a natural respect for property and the laws induced, and

they can be educated and fitted for a higher position and higher destinies. For the education of a people is an important work ; it consists not in cramming youth with mere dry facts and old records. But it is a training up of the people by inculcating and giving a practical exposition of those Christian privileges, on which society must rest, and by elevating them to that position in which their inherent powers can be developed. Thus can the national existence be established on a secure and permanent basis.

Here, then, is a grand mission, a noble task, imposed upon Irish landlords. To be the guides and guardians of the people, to consult for their best interests, to secure their temporal welfare, and with it to promote their civilization, their moral and intellectual advancement,—this is the obligation entailed upon the higher classes by the necessity of their position.—Will they fulfil it? The future happiness of Ireland depends much upon the answer to this question. If they discharge their duty as wise and paternal legislators, and consult for the real interests of the people, they will insure the prosperity of the country, and rear a memorial prouder than the sculptured arch or pillared stone—*monumentum ære perennius*,—which will endure as long as the Irish retain their native and acknowledged characteristics—a generous spirit and a warm heart.

## LETTER III.

### HOMES OF THE PEOPLE.

THE social condition of a people is chiefly determined by the relation in which they stand to the soil on which they dwell. If, induced by security, they have settled themselves permanently therein, if they have gained a foothold, and occupied the land by solid works, the memorials of their energy and labour ; if, in a word, they are thus possessed of a certain inheritance and a home, then having the real guarantees of freedom, they must ultimately be independent, and with the qualification they will sooner or later attain to the full rank and privileges of citizenship. Their freedom must follow as a necessary consequence, from the position which they hold in the state, and can only be delayed until their power is matured, and their intelligence has been fully developed.

Let it be then the first endeavour of a people to gain this settlement ; to create this home, which binds them to their native soil. With this basis of nationality and power they will surely conquer free institu-

tutions ; without it they must be dependent, and therefore enslaved.

The history of nations proves this fact. In England the Tudor dynasty were a despotic race. They ruled their court and nobles with an iron hand. But, tyrants although they were, they dared not infringe on the privileges or injure the liberties of the people. They could not annul Magna Charta, or deprive the free-born Englishman of his birthright. Why ? One thing alone restrained them—the English people were armed citizens, and held the land. The Saxon race had at length, after ages of oppression, won for themselves by their energy, by their fortitude and perseverance, a solid abiding interest in the land, and no despot could dare henceforth to invade their rights.

Strange that this fact, which is of such vital importance, namely, that it is necessary first to provide the people with some settlement as a basis of freedom and national existence, should have been so long overlooked and disregarded by our statesmen, and by those who professed to guide the destinies of Ireland. Strange, that while they clamoured for political rights, they neglected the obvious necessity of social enfranchisement, based upon permanent guarantees. Amidst all the agitation for extension of franchise and repeals of the union, they left the great question still unsettled ; whether the nation should exist at all—whether

the Irish should ever possess an interest in, or a right and title to occupy, their native land ! \*

It is surely time now that the question should be set at rest. The Irish people are no longer indolent serfs, sunk in barbarism. They are rapidly acquiring power, by the cultivation of an inherent intelligence and its application to political uses ; by the increase of their capital, and the development of the country. No longer now is it necessary to import our civilization, and to colonize with the Saxon to the exclusion of the Celtic race. Ireland for the Irish is now the cry. The people claim their heritage, and they are prepared to vindicate their claim, not by empty assertion, but by their actions ; by honest industry, by steadiness of purpose, by energy and self-denial. These are the elements of greatness—these qualities the Irish have already, under favourable auspices, evinced, and by them they will win their way to independence. Give them a fair trial ; place the Irishman, when his intelligence has been quickened and his energies stimulated, in the same position, and concede to him the same advantages, as the occupiers of the soil of England or Scotland, and he will prove

\* Therefore the names of great orators and patriots of a former age, can claim no abiding place in history. Linked to an ephemeral and transitory state of things, they exercised no influence on the future destiny of the people, and left no memorial of their genius, except a title or a name.

that he can also create monuments of industry, and found a home, which shall be a centre of civilization, and the pledge of domestic and social happiness.

For, let us not be deceived ; hitherto that home, which is the basis of civilization, has scarcely been established in Ireland. Where are the proofs of its existence ? Those proofs are found in solid, permanent buildings, in smiling homesteads, in fields enriched by secular toil, in a country adorned by hedge-rows and fences, and ancestral timber. And more, the existence of the home is evinced by the habits and character of the people themselves. Where it exists the people will be laborious, frugal, prudent and loyal citizens of the state in which they own an interest. Where it does not exist, they will be careless, improvident, ready to sacrifice the future for present enjoyment. This is the condition of a nation's existence, impressed, as it were, in plain, indelible characters upon their land, and stereotyped in their habits and their manner of living. Thus he who runs may read. It is by comparisons alone that we can form a right conclusion on these things. Contrast the position of the occupiers of the soil in Norway, Belgium, Switzerland, or Tuscany ; in countries where the people, encouraged by long security, have permanently established themselves in a home ; compare their well-fenced fields, their habitations, around which a

general air of comfort and wellbeing is diffused, with the neglected homesteads and comfortless abodes of the Irish peasantry ; and we shall easily understand the difference between a people who have long inherited, and those who have scarcely yet been naturalized in, the land. It will not suffice to point out our splendid mansions, surrounded by their parks and pleasure grounds, the luxurious abodes of a territorial aristocracy. These are the ornamental appendages of the land, as the nobility are the carved topstone of the column. But where are the homes of the people ? Where the cheerful abodes of a happy, contented peasantry, long united to the soil ?—the peaceful retreats in which generations have lived and died—where the young have toiled, and the aged have calmly passed through the last term of their pilgrimage. These are proofs of the existence of a great nation ; of a middle class—a conservative body of citizens attached to the state, who constitute the keystone of the arch, the solid base of the column. Where the cottage homes are maintained, the palace is secure ; but no social system is sound, which ignores the independent existence, the happiness and legitimate wants of the people.

It is a noble work to call a nation into existence, to arouse them to a sense of their duty and responsibilities, to stimulate their innate powers, to enable

them, by their own exertions, to become capitalists, independent, and to create a “home” in the land.

This work must be done—it lies at the threshold of all future improvement. Unless a people are associated with property, located in a home, and bound to the state by some permanent ties, they cannot be accessible to the influences of our Christian civilization. Unless, therefore, this great original institution, on which the social fabric is based, is maintained in its integrity, the other institutions connected with the intellectual and moral advancement of the people—those of which the church and the school are the material type—will be neglected and left to decay.

Show me a country where, owing to just and impartial institutions, the great body of the people are connected with the state by property ; where the existence of their “home” is evidenced by their material comforts ; and from those facts alone I will augur the moral and intellectual condition of that people. Their independent spirit, their energy, intelligence, and self-denial will be impressed in broad indelible characters on the very surface of their soil. Show me again a country where the “home” has been neglected ; where the people, debarred by an insecure condition from the acquisition of capital, have never settled down permanently ; where, uncertain of their future, they do not possess that hope

which is the great stimulant to improvement, and I will recognise among them that character and those habits which are not indigenous to race or country, but belong to certain conditions of society, and are the certain proofs of misgovernment and of unjust institutions.

I have said that there is little evidence throughout Ireland of the existence of the “home,” or, in other words, little to show that the people have hitherto been possessed of real property, and taken firm root in the soil. The late famine sufficiently proved this fact. Such a visitation coming upon a people (like the Swiss or Norwegians) who had been long settled in the land, and had invested therein the labour and savings of generations, could not have suddenly overwhelmed them. But those who have saved nothing, inherited nothing, who, cast loose upon the soil, have never created a heritage in their native land, must expect the natural results of an uncertain and precarious existence. That famine was not altogether a peculiar visitation of Providence ; but a natural result induced by certain predisposing causes, which may be easily traced out and ascertained.

Hence, then, arises the necessity of erecting this “home,” and of associating the people of Ireland with their country by the ties of property. And in order to accomplish this work, it is not necessary to

interfere with the legitimate rights of property, or to disturb the existing arrangements of society. On the contrary, I believe that our social system as at present constituted will afford a basis upon which can be reared a solid framework of national prosperity. Only let us not introduce those radical reforms based on abstract theories, which tend often to degrade or weaken the strength of a community. The existence of the Irish people should not depend upon such questions as, whether large or small farming is most profitable, or whether a system of great capitalists and labourers, instead of landlords and tenants, is best calculated to develop the resources of the soil. Of one thing let us be assured, that it is our duty to take the people as they are, and to develop not only their material but also their moral and intellectual resources.

I would then at once take measures to naturalize the people in the country, and advance them to the dignity of independent citizens. To the occupiers of the soil I would give that which is the great stimulant to improvement—security. This, I consider, can, on the whole, be best attained under the present social arrangements, by a leasing system established on fair and equitable terms. If it were once understood and laid down as a certain principle that every occupier of land, whether large or small (for I consider that the small holder is entitled to the same conditions and

privileges as the others) should obtain a lease on fair and liberal terms, the duration of which might depend upon the amount of capital which he had invested or was prepared to invest in the land, the people would thereby be encouraged to improve by an inducement which has seldom failed to arouse exertion, and thus to create material prosperity. Thus in a short time we might find throughout Ireland a body of lease-holders, a substantial yeomanry, connected with the soil and associated with the landlords in the property of the country, who, having expended their capital in the land, and thereby possessing a permanent interest in the state, would naturally become independent, and, with the qualification, would evince that conservative spirit, that patriotism and loyalty which are characteristic of true citizens.

## LETTER IV.

### TENANT-RIGHT.

THERE are certain questions of deep practical import—*involving perhaps the future destiny and the present independent existence of a nation*—which have long lain dormant, and are only brought prominently forward when the circumstances of the times and the condition of the people demand that they should be well considered and speedily solved.

Such is that great question which so materially affects the Irish people—namely, whether they shall at length obtain, and in what manner they can possess, that security which may encourage them to invest their capital, to create a home, and thus to acquire a permanent guarantee in their native land.

Formerly, when the people had inherited no capital, and had no solid basis of improvement, the question of security was of little moment. Now they are progressing in civilization—they have begun to learn the advantages of industry and self-denial—their mind is informed, and intelligence aroused—they are accumu-

lating wealth—in a word, they are becoming capitalists, and they wish to invest their resources, their industry, their savings, and intelligence, in a manner which will insure them a safe and profitable return.

The demand, therefore, for certain definite guarantees arises naturally from the development of the national powers. As the plant reaches maturity it turns towards the sun, to the centre of life. Here, then, is simply the position of the great body of the Irish people who occupy and derive subsistence from the soil. They have at present little interest therein—their existence depends upon a precarious tenure. Now, when they are acquiring capital, and desire to invest it, they naturally demand some better security than that derived from the indulgence of the landlords, who, according to their individual character, may encourage or paralyze their exertions, and seal up or let loose the sources of prosperity.

Now, granting even that all the lords of the soil in Ireland are fully aware of their responsibility, and anxious to discharge, to the fullest extent, their obligations towards their tenants, still this security can only last a generation. Their successors may be improvident and avaricious. But the existence of a people—their independence and social position—should not be dependent on the individual character of any class. These should be based upon a definite contract and

certain guarantees. Until this is done, I cannot see a rational prospect of solid, permanent improvement. The house built on a sandy foundation may look fair on the outside, but it will not stand the brunt of the storm. Now is the time to establish this solid basis of nationality.

I have said that I considered a lease for a certain definite period—given in consideration of improvements either made or intended by the occupier—was a form of contract which—without any prejudice of existing rights—was quite in accordance with our social system, and would encourage the tenant to invest his capital, and gradually to develop the resources of the soil, in which he would, at least during his tenure, be a joint proprietor with the landlord. Conscious that while he fulfilled the conditions of his contract he could not be dispossessed, he would devote his energies and intelligence to the proper cultivation of the land—he would expend upon it all his capital and industry, and confidently expect to realize from it a good return. It is chiefly under the operation of the leasing system in Scotland that a soil naturally sterile has been enriched and brought to the highest state of fertility.

A question however, of very great importance to the occupiers of land in Ireland has arisen in consequence of the peculiar nature of their contract with

the owners of the soil. In England the tenant takes a farm as he would a machine, in order to occupy it, and work the land during some specified term. The landlord is bound to supply everything necessary for the proper cultivation of the land, such as dwelling-houses and farm-buildings, and he must also keep gates and fences in repair. Consequently the incoming tenant is not required to expend any capital except that which the proper culture of the soil demands, and which is amply repaid to him by successive crops. In Ireland the landowners generally have not sufficient capital to erect homesteads and farm-buildings on their estates. The tenant, therefore, simply receives the land unprovided, as it were, with that machinery which is essential to its right cultivation, and he is expected to supply the deficiency from his own capital. If he wishes to live comfortably, he must build his own house, make sheds for his cattle, and define his boundaries with permanent fences. There are some landowners who have acquiesced, and do still acquiesce, in a loose disjointed state of things, which only tends to perpetuate serfage and barbarism—who think that stifling, comfortless cabins are abodes good enough for our peasantry, and who believe that hamlets and cottages, and the homesteads of small occupiers, are not an ornament but a deformity to the land. They would, therefore, leave the people as they are, in

a precarious, dependent, condition, and discourage them from investing their capital, and thereby acquiring a foothold in the land. But, while we respect the rights of property, we must regard not only the presumed interests of individuals, but also the general welfare of the whole community. Where the people depend chiefly on the soil, it is essential that the resources of that soil should be fully developed. It is also beneficial to the state that this work should be accomplished by the industry and capital of the people themselves, as thus they will gain a more enduring interest in the country ; and besides, the exigencies of Christian civilization demand that the people should be comfortably lodged. The lord of the soil incurs an obligation towards the public which ought to be fulfilled. He should either make the land available by his own capital, or permit his tenants to occupy it, to establish a home therein, and to erect that machinery which the culture of the soil necessitates. But, in order to supply these necessary requirements, the tenant must invest his capital, and for this he requires good and sufficient security. Hence has arisen the demand for tenant-right, which seems to be a natural and reasonable claim, arising from the peculiar circumstances of the occupancy of land in Ireland.

If we understand by this term simply a reasonable

compensation given to an outgoing tenant at the expiration of his tenure for his capital expended in unexhausted improvements, by which the actual value of the land is increased, it seems, under existing circumstances, to be a fair, legitimate demand. In fact, the demand for the security on which permanent improvement must be made, ought not to be withheld, and this concession to the occupiers of land in Ireland would tend very much to the solution of that great question in which the national existence is involved. The people, having then acquired confidence and a sure hope in the future, would exert themselves to create a solid interest in the country, and to become united to the state. Then indeed, when the Irish possess a secure "status" in their country, and are identified with its soil, they will aspire to a real nationality, and constitute, as citizens, an integral portion of the commonwealth. When the great work has been once achieved, and the "home" has been established throughout the land, guarded by time-honoured institutions, England may rest assured that Ireland, once a source of weakness, will be the bulwark of her strength. But until that has been done, and the just requirements of a people are fulfilled, she cannot expect loyalty, patriotism, or contentment, because these virtues are only found clustered around the hearth-stone where social happiness is cherished ;— they can-

not subsist where there are no material guarantees, no sure pledges of national existence—no real basis of conservatism and citizenship.

An equitable law of tenant-right would establish that security on which the home is based. By it an opportunity would be afforded of acquiring property to all those who were industrious and anxious to improve. In all cases where the landlord might not possess the capital to erect farm buildings, and to provide, as in England, the requisite machinery for the right cultivation of the farm, the tenant should be empowered to expend his own capital, and to effect these improvements, on the understanding that at the expiration of his tenure, he should be entitled to just compensation for his own labour and resources invested in the land, by which it was rendered more valuable ; for the tenant could only in justice claim compensation for improvements which added to the marketable value of the land. These are the basis of a certain term and definite tenure of occupation (for tenant-right should not supersede, but is supplemental to, a lease), and on that security which tenant-right would give, the occupier might create a property, and ensure to himself and his descendants a sure return for the investment of his capital. No longer aliens, the people would soon possess a home and an interest in their native land.

Now, however desirous we may be to preserve inviolate the rights of property, yet there are certain cases in which the individual interests must be superseded by those of the community at large. Thus it is a matter of vital importance in the management of land, from which all derive subsistence, that the productive powers of the soil should be developed, and the people should be encouraged to invest therein their enterprise, labour, and resources. It is also essential to the well-being of the state that the great body of the people should have a permanent interest, and be united to it by the ties of property. No exclusive privileges of individuals ought to interfere with these great objects, because in them is involved the national existence and "*salus populi suprema lex.*" If, for instance, the lords of the soil, in whom the absolute dominion is vested, should unite to drive forth a population of peaceful, industrious, and solvent occupiers—if they should seek to reduce them from an independent condition to vassalage, or even should condemn them to the vicissitudes of a precarious existence, by refusing altogether that security which would stimulate their exertions and make them independent, it would be right that the state should protect the lawful interests of its members, and prevent the fatal consequences,—a suicidal, unjust policy. On these grounds alone do we justify the necessity which, I think, at

present exists for direct interference of the state. Many, I know, consider that the interference of the legislature in a matter of simple contract is not only unnecessary but prejudicial. They fondly believe that both parties, guided by an enlightened self-interest, will arrive at a satisfactory solution of that great social problem which involves the independent existence of the nation. But the legislator, guided by the experience of the past, will not compromise the future happiness of a people, unless he can obtain some better guarantee than that which is based on the peculiar sense which landlords may possess of their obligations. He must authoritatively require that while the rights of property are protected, the duties and responsibilities attached to it should not be ignored. If, indeed, the terms of the contract have always been hitherto liberally interpreted and equitably fulfilled, then he might acquiesce in the existing order of things, and resolve "*quieta non movere.*" But if the condition of the people and their social position in the commonwealth, do clearly evince that their legitimate desires have not been regarded, while, condemned to a precarious subsistence, they have never had that incentive to exertion which a certain hope in the future inspires. If the lords of the soil, unable or unwilling themselves to expend capital, have precluded the tenant, by the denial of security, from investing his savings in the

land, and thus becoming attached to the state by the ties of property, then it is undoubtedly the duty of the legislature to interfere, and to confirm to the people, by a definite enactment, that guarantee which may encourage them to develop their own inherent powers, and the natural resources of the country.

I have now endeavoured to show how that basis can be raised, upon which the independent national existence of the Irish may be established. When the security essential to their happiness and social improvement has been confirmed to them as a right —when a field of exertion is opened, and they are invited to occupy the land, to invest capital and create a permanent home therein—when the first step towards real independence has been taken. It will then rest with themselves to work out their own destiny. Even when all obstacles are removed, and facilities for improvement afforded, the transition from a dependent state to the social position of free enlightened citizens, cannot be at once accomplished. For the rest, we must trust to time and to the ameliorating influence of a sound, practical, national education.

## LETTER V.

### EDUCATION.

WHAT is national education ? It is the training up of a people in accordance with the varied requirements of our complex organization ; it is the means by which we bring them under the influence of Christianity, we inspire them with generous emulation, with hope in the future ; we develop their moral and intellectual powers, eradicate evil habits, and implant the germs of good. This education should be the object of our social institutions. We can attain this end only by a proper recognition of the physical, moral, and intellectual necessities of the people, and by providing for the natural wants of each individual in the state. A government which, (like that of Austria) promotes only the temporal well-being of the people, while it fetters their intellectual energy, does not properly fulfil its mission. It satisfies the animal instincts, but ignores the nobler elements of our nature. Again, we know by experience that a mere informing of the mind and awakening of the intelligence is not

sufficient unless there be a sound spirit of practical religion infused—not a religion of formulas and profession, but one based on the principles of that gospel which appeals to the highest sympathies of man, which purifies his heart, sublimes his affections, and teaches him to fulfil his obligations towards his neighbour ; because, by doing so he will follow the example and the precepts of his God.

Education, then, properly so called, takes a wide range, and is connected with all the chief objects of statesmanship. For, first, we shall find it impossible rightly to instruct the people, and inspire them with good habits, unless we insure to them a certain amount of physical comfort, and place them in a position in which they may not only be freed from the harassing cares of actual want, but where they may be able to command some period for relaxation and leisure for improvement, and where they can aspire to the dignity and privileges of citizenship. Therefore, we should provide them with the means of acquiring by their own exertions an honest livelihood. We should bind them down by certain guarantees to the country, and give them an abiding settlement therein.

When this work has been accomplished, we shall find that a great step has been taken to forward the education of the people. Attached to their country, and settled in a permanent home, they will be localised

and accessible to the ameliorating influences of Christianity and civilization. Stimulated by a certain hope in the future, they will acquire property, and with it those habits of persevering industry, of prudence, frugality and self-denial, and that character of loyalty and patriotism which are characteristic alone of those who are independent, who are conscious that they belong to the state, and that by their own exertions they may work out their social rank and prosperity. There are virtues attached to the home which can only be found where the "home" exists—virtues of the patriot and the citizen—which belong only to those who have an interest in their country.

Therefore do I consider it a matter of the utmost importance that the position of the people should be clearly defined ; and every facility afforded to them of improving their condition and insuring their independence. This is the basis of future greatness and national prosperity. Upon this we may rear a solid structure, supported by the great original institutions of society. Without this basis we have no fulcrum, no firm resting-place for our lever. We shall build upon the sand. All our theories for the regeneration of the people will prove hollow and visionary. They cannot avail where there is no substratum—no real, definite, national existence. If you retain a people in a condition of dependence and serfage, if you exclude

from them a certain hope in the future, and condemn them to a precarious existence, beware of developing their intelligence and reasoning powers. If you do, they will assuredly be discontented with a position which relegates them to the rank of slaves or animals. Like the Grecian hero, they will call for light, and light they must get.—Refuse it at your peril ; and when the first ray has dawned they will require the blaze of the noon tide sun. They will expect that the natural wants of their moral and intellectual nature shall be fulfilled ; that they shall be elevated to the dignity of men, of independent agents, and free-born citizens of the commonwealth.

Elevate them, therefore, to this independent social position ; rescue them from a life of mere animal toil and animal enjoyments. Then, when the soil is prepared for the seed, when the people are restricted within certain definite limits, bound by the ties of “home,” of parish, and neighbourhood, localised, as it were, they will be brought within the sphere of those influences which alone are available to reform and regenerate society. First among these influences is the diffusion among the people of the truths of practical Christianity, as exemplified and enunciated by the great Founder of our religion ; the setting before them a right standard of morality, by which they can clearly ascertain their duties towards God and their neighbour.

This instruction in, and authoritative exposition of Christian principles as an essential fundamental part of our national education, has been much overlooked, and to this cause I mainly attribute those evils which even still produce bitter fruits amongst us. To it I attribute our want of union and concord, the want of sympathy between certain classes in society ; the little forbearance, long suffering, or brotherly kindness which has existed among those who, though they differ in particular articles of faith, yet all profess to believe in the same Saviour, to follow his example, and to fight under the banner of the gospel, Let me not be misunderstood. I do not pretend to discuss here the merits or demerits of rival churches. All I say is this, that there is a certain standard—there are certain great fundamental principles which every professing Christian must follow, according to which he must shape his life and actions, otherwise there will be no vitality or soundness in his religion. The essence of Christianity is charity, long suffering, love. Where these exist, and the good seed implanted in the heart is manifest by the life, there is the religion of the gospel. Where these do not exist, whatever the profession may be, there is no Christianity. Let all parties agree to differ upon certain points of doctrine, but let them unanimously uphold and abide by the great principles of the Christian faith. Let them inculcate them by

their example, teach the people to observe them, emulate each other in works of beneficence and love. Then there will be hope, when her sons are united in brotherly concord, that Ireland may be emancipated from her evils. Until then her prosperity and happiness must remain as it always has been—insecure and unsubstantial.

For Christianity is the only true basis of civilization and social happiness. It accords with the convictions, the natural requirements, and the highest aspirations of our nature. Where its principles are practically understood and followed, there will be the greatest amount of prosperity and happiness diffused throughout the community. Where it does not exist, we cannot expect that men will be good neighbours and friends, good heads of families, upright citizens, and loyal subjects. No form of instruction, however elaborate, which is concerned only with the intellectual powers, while it ignores the primary need of religious training, can avail to eradicate the evil habits, or to change permanently the character of a people. Unless the moral standard is pure, the national institutions must be vitiated and corrupt. The history of the ancient world proves this fact. What was the boasted civilization of Greece and Rome? They deified their lusts, worshipped false impersonations of the Creator, raised temples in

honour of divinities who presided over every crime. Even their social institutions, the existence of slavery, the bloody games of the circus, the absence of all provision for the destitute, the barbaric rites—all these proved that the elements of the old savage nature, the germ of innate depravity, had never been eradicated ; that a gilded refinement had concealed the corruption festering beneath. And the fate of these empires is a warning to all, and a confirmation of the truth, that mere intellectual power, without moral principle, can never develop true humanity ; that a sound practical religion is indispensable to elevate and preserve a nation.

Therefore, in laying down the basis of a permanent nationality in Ireland, I would take the highest grounds, and accept no system which does not recognise Christianity as the great regenerative influence, and provide accordingly for the spiritual as well as the temporal necessities of the people. But by Christianity I understand that religion which is manifested by its fruits ; not one of mere profession, which sanctions party strife, and strives to uphold a false supremacy ; not a Pharisaical creed which embitters the relations of life, and draws a line of demarcation between children of a common soil,—but that religion which teaches to all their relative duties ; which enjoins the landlord to be liberal and just to those

over whom Providence has placed him ; the employer to treat his servants with indulgence ; the poor man to labour and endeavour, by honest industry, to attain a position in which he may be secure from the temptations of hardship and poverty. Then, when all are united in the common bond of Christianity ; when charity and a kindly sympathy evinced by the higher classes has produced corresponding fruits of gratitude and love among their poorer neighbours ; when that selfish policy which alienates and degrades the people shall no longer exist, but, instead of suspicion and contempt, a spirit of forbearance and brotherly kindness shall prevail, then may we confidently look forward to a future of peace, happiness, and prosperity in our land.

In a system of popular education we should regard the essential wants of the people, and not neglect to impart that instruction which especially pertains to the peculiar station in life, the profession or calling of each individual. And especially should we provide that all be instructed in the general principles of knowledge, in order that new ideas may be imparted, and constant and wholesome aliment be supplied to the imagination and reasoning powers. If we merely supply the instruments of learning, the mechanical part, such as reading, writing, and then neglect the further means and inducements which would stimulate the

people to acquire useful knowledge, we shall do little good, and possibly may effect much harm. A mind only half improved may become a prey to vain imaginations, and exhaust itself in useless theories. Practical knowledge is what we want—that wisdom which will avail a man in the different relations of life, as the head of a family and citizen of the commonwealth. And yet this is much neglected in our schools. Children are carefully instructed in grammar, geography, history; but the great primary laws of nature—those which regulate the health of the mind and body—laws of ventilation, of light and heat, the general principles of chemistry, of geology, botany and physics, those matters which belong to the experience of every-day life, and are connected with their profession as artizans or agriculturists, or with the duties of females as wives, mothers, and heads of households, these are often neglected or despised. Thus we may have a people clever enough, with minds crammed full of facts and fictions, but wholly impractical, wholly unfitted to grapple with the stern realities of life. Knowledge is power only when it is directed to some useful, practical result. Otherwise the ebullitions of misguided genius may, like the volcano, burst forth only to effect a wide-spread devastation. The Irish, who are quick in perception, highly imaginative and prone to exaggeration, require especially a system of education based

on clear, definite, logical reasoning, which may restrain their fancy, and bind them down to the stern realities of life.

Thus I have sketched out the outlines of a system of national education, by which I believe that useful habits might be infused, and the moral and intellectual power strengthened among the people. The growth of national existence, as in the individual man, must progress *pari passu*, and be complete in all its parts. Provide for the material wants, the physical comforts of the people, while you neglect their moral and intellectual requirements, and you condemn them to a mere animal existence. Inform the mind, develop the intellect, but if you do not apply the restraint of morality and religion—if you allow that mind, misdirected, to expatiate on delusions and idle fancies, if you direct it not to some practical end, you will but implant the seeds of future evil. Education, I repeat, consists not in the undue development of one, but in the improvement of all the parts of our organization, in the training up of the man as a moral, intelligent, responsible being, and preparing him to fulfil rightly his various duties as a father, a citizen, and a subject, in that station to which it may please God to call him.

## LETTER VI.

### THE PEASANTRY.

WHEN we view the actual condition of the Irish people, we find a numerous class whose interests have been little regarded, who have been often allowed, through neglect, to lapse into indigence, or gradually to fall away through the operation of a selfish policy, although they constitute a very important section of the community. I allude to our peasantry, to the small landholders, who cultivate their farms by their own hands—who supply the demands of the labour market, and the military strength of the country. I mention this class more particularly, because my former letters might be supposed to refer chiefly to those who, possessing a reserve fund of capital, could afford to expend it in those permanent, unexhausted improvements, of which a tenant-right bill would take cognizance. The small occupiers of land, having little capital beyond their labour, could not be expected to do more than to discharge faithfully their obligations, to maintain their families in comfort and respectability,

and to rear up industrious and loyal citizens for the state. If they fulfil their duties rightly, they are entitled to the protection of the legislature, and their lawful claims ought not to be set aside or lightly regarded.

For the existence of a contented, industrious peasant class, possessing some guarantee of independence, who hold to the soil by old sympathies and local associations, and who are, therefore, bound to their country by some definite ties, is an important element in our social system. Where we find such a class existing, we should beware of depriving them of their hope in the future, by breaking altogether the link which unites them to the property of the country. We should not blindly adhere to a selfish policy, based on false principles of political economy, which would alienate them from the land, cast them loose on the soil, allow them no property, no means of realizing a little capital ; but which, by reducing them to the condition of hinds or farm labourers, would relegate them to the uncertain condition of the proletarian classes, and thus prepare the way for their present degradation and their ultimate extinction. For the gradual extinction of a peasantry, when once they are disconnected from the land, and converted into hirelings, is a slow but a sure process. Whenever a better machine can be obtained to do the work ;

when tillage is no longer remunerative to the large farmer, and cattle pay better than crops, then there is no longer any place for the labourer, or occasion for his services. He must quit the soil where he is now a stranger, and seek employment elsewhere, or enter the poorhouse. Therefore, it is no blind instinct which impels the Irish peasant to cling obstinately to the land, but the instinct of self-preservation. He knows that with land, with a home, and a hope in the future, he is a man, secure and independent ; without it, he is but a machine, a unit undistinguished among the mass of his fellow-hirelings, unconnected with the state, in which he has no definite interest. Witness the case of England, where, during the last half-century, owing to the increase of wealth, the pressure of capital, and the want of legal protection, the rural population of small farmers and landholders has gradually disappeared. Formerly, at a period not so highly civilized, there was a fine, sturdy Saxon peasantry, who occupied the soil of England. Everywhere the hamlets, the cottage homes, embowered among ancient trees, the small centres of social and domestic virtue, the pledge of loyalty and patriotism, were seen throughout the land. Then came the rage for improvement, the pressure of inordinate wealth, the selfish desire of adding house to house and field to field. Small estates were bought up, whole

populations were forced to emigrate, driven forth according to the forms of a strict legality—the cottages were levelled, hamlets disappeared, and the plough passed over the old landmarks, the homes and tillage of the poor. Even the rage for (miscalled) improvement extended to the further bounds of the kingdom, and the Highlands of Scotland, the nursery of our soldiers, were depopulated by those who had unjustly converted their *seignorial* into *territorial* rights, and asserted claims to which they never were entitled, and which, under a more despotic government, would not have been tolerated. Thenceforth, the small land-holder, with his old traditions and prejudices, was an incumbrance unsuited to the time. His house was an eyesore—his little hedge-row an unsightly object. All must be got rid of. The march of intellect, the progress of the age, the dogmas of a system which regarded production alone, and valued men only as machines—all demanded their extinction. Therefore, that noble Saxon peasantry perished from the land. Some emigrated to foreign shores, or remained to till, as farm hinds, the soil where their ancestors once earned a little heritage. The majority were absorbed in the population of the great cities, and now constitute the operatives of the manufacturing towns. Bound down to an incessant toil by an iron necessity, dependent on the wages of daily labour, without any

capital, save their health and strength, without any definite hope in the future, or lasting interest in their country, they are unsettled in their habits, sensual and intolerant, and constitute the weakness rather than the secure defence of the empire. England may yet rue the loss of that independent peasantry, whose type is still found, not among the reckless, improvident hordes of the manufacturing cities, but far away among the Western prairies and the forests of America—far from a land where all the glories of Magna Charta and the boast of free institutions could not preserve to the Englishman that security and that home without which there is no real independence, no firm basis of citizenship. Is not the Irish peasant justified in struggling against a fate which has already oppressed his fellow subjects, which would as certainly oppress him if the theory of certain political economists was carried out ; of those who consider that a system of large farms and cottars with a cabbage garden, of great capitalists and labourers reduced to the level of machines, is best calculated to develop the resources of a country, forgetful that man himself is a production at least as valuable to the community as turnips and cattle ?

The history of mankind bears witness to the danger which nations have incurred when they wilfully per-

mit the ruin of a body of solvent, independent citizens, who constitute their true capital and defence. What destroyed Rome, the mightiest empire of the ancient world? It was not the hordes of half-clad barbarians who had often been driven back from her frontiers by the legions. Those legions were recruited from the ranks of a free and martial peasantry, the small land-holders who occupied and cultivated themselves the soil of Latium. From them sprung her consuls and dictators, those who led her armies to victory. And while her yeomanry existed, while the corn and the vine flourished, and the fields of Italy teemed with a hardy, industrious population, Rome was invincible. There was the "palladium" of her safety. She beat back the Gauls, and refused all compromise with Hannibal, even when her bravest were slaughtered at Cannæ. The iron race was still untamed, the dragon's teeth, sown in the land, could still send forth another brood. But evil times came, and luxury and selfishness did what the Carthaginian could not accomplish. The wealth of Asia poured in, great capitalists sprung up, they bought the lands, removed the old landmarks, and created vast estates out of the small farms, the patrimony of the legions. Then the population began to disappear from the fields, the tillage lands were converted into pasture, slaves replaced the free cultivators, and the sheep roamed and cattle grazed among the

deserted homes of the people. Therefore, when the barbarian rushed down on Italy, he found nought but an effeminate crowd of luxurious nobles, of slaves and parasites, and he swept them all to perdition. The stalwart peasantry, the bone and sinew of the nation, had perished off the land, and with them fell the empire ! Keep, then, your peasantry ; quench not the light on the hearth ; waste not their cottage homes ; degrade them not to the insecure condition of serfs and hirelings. Leave them their little heritage, the guarantee of their present existence, the hope of their future. Give them a stake in the country, make them honest, independent, and loyal ; destroy not with them the hope and defence of the country. This is the lesson which we read, inscribed in broad, legible characters, upon the deserted fields and the rank pastures of the Campagna of Rome !

Having now established the fact that the existence of a solvent class of peasantry attached to the soil is an advantage to the state, and that any policy which tends to needlessly diminish their numbers, or to degrade them to an inferior and dependent condition, is calculated to prejudice the general interests, it remains only to consider in what manner we may best consult for the welfare of that class, and afford to them that protection to which they are entitled.

The condition of the Irish peasantry has been long a subject of reproach to those who, as lords of the soil, have, during centuries, influenced the destinies of the people. The landlords of Ireland are the representatives of the English government, and to them the state has delegated its authority. If, then, the Irish have hitherto been the worst-conditioned peasantry in Europe,—if, ill-cared for and oppressed, they have been allowed to languish in a state of insecurity—if, unable to improve their condition, and to advance higher in the social scale, they have exhibited the characteristics of a servile population, and, slothfully reckless and improvident, have lived only for the present hour, the landlords of Ireland, and the landlords alone, are to blame. They are to blame who shut the people out from hope—who make no effort to rescue them from a degraded condition—who never encouraged or taught them to aspire to better things, and to work out their own independence. Still they have the power, if they only possessed the will, to convert an unsettled and discontented population into industrious, happy, and loyal citizens; and England should lay upon them a solemn obligation—even now, at the eleventh hour—to recognise the duties attached to their position, and instead of cancelling the debt by notices to quit or an exterminating process, to take the people as they are, even with all “their imperfections on their heads,”

and, as their natural protectors, to train them up, educate them, and provide for their social happiness and future prosperity.

The task which I would propose now to the landlords of Ireland is not a very difficult one. They hold the springs of national prosperity—let them unseal the fountains. They possess already the elements of power and nationality in a population intelligent, warm-hearted, impulsive, and attached to their native soil. Let them not discourage or weaken that attachment—it is the natural impulse of the heart. Rather let them sympathise with the feelings of the humble occupier of the land, and endeavour to recognise and fulfil his legitimate desires. He, too, would be a citizen connected with property and naturalized in the country—he would require some share of that security which the wealthy capitalist demands as a right ; and as a basis of improvement, and he might naturally expect that in a Christian community those benefits should be secured them which are consistent with Christian civilization. For Christianity and the political economy of the gospel do require that every individual in the state should be provided with the necessaries, and, if possible, with the simple comforts of life ; that no artificial obstructions should prevent him from acquiring, by his honest industry, an independent livelihood ; that he should be properly lodged

(for the morality of a people, and their civilization, depend much upon good and sufficient house accommodation) ; and, lastly, that he should have some relaxation from toil, and a season set apart for religious and intellectual culture. These are objects which the Christian statesman will endeavour to obtain for those who have been committed to his charge. Nor will he rest satisfied until the majority, at least, have shared in those blessings ; until they, rescued from a precarious and grovelling condition, exhibit, both in their dwellings, their personal appearance, and in their improved character and habits, that they have finally emerged from darkness, and are rejoicing in the life-growing light of Heaven. How can those who are pent up in dark, comfortless habitations—who are seldom cheered by the sympathy or intercourse with their superiors—who have received no practical education beyond the rudiments of mechanical learning—whose minds are, therefore, unenlightened, and reasoning powers undeveloped, be expected to fulfil the part of intelligent, useful, and upright citizens ? It is impossible—as you mould the masses, so you will have them ; if you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. Treat them unjustly, with illiberality, and contempt, and they will be suspicious, unfriendly, dishonest, and deceitful. Treat them with justice, with liberality, with a due regard to their reasonable

wants, and you will find them, ere long, grateful, honest, and industrious. The secret of national prosperity lies with yourselves. The great principles by which mankind are governed never alter. It is right, therefore, that the landlords of Ireland, who represent the state, and to whom the power has been delegated, should, as legislators, recognise these principles, and concede to the humbler classes, to the peasantry and small occupiers of land, those blessings which a Christian policy requires, and which are essential to their advancement and happiness.

I have now endeavoured to define what I believe ought to be done by those who are the natural guardians of the people, and especially of the poorer classes. Still, a few words remain to be said before my task is done. Let the people look to themselves. With them, finally, lies the solution of the great problem of national existence. Their rulers may guide and encourage, they may remove obstructions, and afford the means of improvement. But if the people do not respond to their call ; if, wedded to evil habits and grovelling desires, they refuse instruction, and understand not the exigencies of the age, they cannot expect that God's laws will be subverted, and a miracle worked in their behalf. The world is not what it was. We live fast lives. "Life is real—life is earnest." The age demands not alone hard labour, but also that

labour should be directed by intelligence. Science is shedding a broad light over the world, and they who wilfully sit in darkness must submit to that iron necessity which crushes down the weak beneath the strong. Mind must rule matter. Let the Irish peasantry be warned in time—be warned by the fate of their brethren in England. The wealthy capitalist, with his intelligence and machinery, will press hard on the poor occupier, whose only capital is his labour, unless the latter can bring science and reason to his aid, can cultivate his land with profit, and increase its productive powers. The old slothful and improvident habits, and a system connected with minute subdivision of land, with bad husbandry, intemperance, and imprudent marriages, do not consist with real progress, with independence, and true nationality. If the people would secure these blessings they must intelligently strive towards that end, and work out their own social prosperity. Self-controul, foresight, and perseverance, are absolutely essential to their future prosperity. If they do not cultivate these virtues, they will dig their own graves, and promote their own extinction. The march of reform will sweep away their barbarism ; their weak and perishable structures, their cottages, will disappear ; the cattle will roam through the homesteads ; the machine will do the work of rude, uncivilized man ; and when all is

over, when the peasant has disappeared, none will be found to pity or sympathise with those who neglected their opportunities, who forsook the only true path of safety, and precipitated their own destruction. May it never be the task of some future historian to record this as the fate of the Irish people ! and to lament over opportunities lost and generous efforts misdirected.

## LETTER VII.

### OUR FUTURE POLICY.

HITHERTO I have dealt with general principles, and stated broadly what ought to be the basis of our policy towards the people ; I would now define that policy a little in detail.

It does appear, on looking back over the past history of Ireland, that we have erred in our government of the people. We have not met their just requirements, or realized the necessary conditions of real national existence, and the consequence has been, a suspicious feeling, a distrust engendered among the Irish ; they are impatient of control, and averse to institutions under which they have not been able to acquire property, and a solid interest in the land. It will, therefore, be necessary henceforth to introduce such changes, and such a modification of our social system, as may procure the advancement of the people to the rank of citizens, and attach them firmly to the state. In other words, as we before stated, they must own property and a “ home.”

Now, this “home” depends chiefly on the manner in which the occupation of the land is secured to the people. The terms of the contract differ in many parts of the world. Among the nations of antiquity we find that the majority of the people were possessed of land, and therefore entitled to the rank of citizens. In the earlier period of the republics of Greece and Rome, they knew well the value of a compact phalanx of citizens attached to the country. There were no evictions and exterminating landlords when Miltiades fought at Marathon, and Hannibal marched from Cannæ. When tenures were given, the term was generally a long one. This was necessary in order to encourage the planting of trees, and secular improvements. The “emphyteritic” lease (derived from a word (*εμφευτευσις*) signifying the rearing of plants) was a common tenure. It lasted from sixty to ninety years. There is not much proof, from the appearance of our country, that planting leases have prevailed much in Ireland. When we turn to modern Europe, we find that in some countries, as Norway and Switzerland, the small landholders and bulk of the people are proprietors. In Italy the “metayer” system, by which the landlord and occupier share the produce, has generally subsisted, and under it the people have lived comfortably, and the land is well cultivated. In upper Austria, the Tyrol, and Belgum, the in-

dustry and enterprise of the cultivators has been stimulated by a permanent contract on liberal conditions. Everywhere, in fact, even among the semi-civilized nations of China and Japan, and in some parts of those countries still subject to the Mahometan despotism, even beneath the snowy summits of Lebanon, and among the vallies of the Balkan, where the people have been permitted, undisturbed during ages, to accumulate property, and to acquire a certain guarantee of existence ; there they have given evidence of the fact, by their patient industry, their contented spirit, and works achieved by persevering toil. A certain settlement in the land is essential to secure the loyalty of the people ; otherwise there is danger that they may look upon great radical changes, and even on foreign aggression, as matters of slight import to them, and evince a spirit of apathy and indifference. This was the case in Prussia, where, previous to the occupation by the French, the people were dependent, and bound by a servile contract to their landlords, until the struggle for life came, and it was necessary to summon all the strength, and call forth all the energies of the nation to drive out the invader. Then new blood had to be infused into the system ; a servile population were no match for the veterans of Napoleon. They could only be met and resisted by freemen. Therefore the enlightened states-

men of Prussia determined to give the people a guarantee of independence to associate them with the property of the soil, and attach them to the state. They converted them partly into proprietors, partly into tenants holding under a definite contract.

Here there was undoubtedly a violation of the rights of property. But it was dictated and justified by necessity, and the result has proved the wisdom of the measure. Prussia, although placed in a dangerous position between the most powerful and despotic monarchies of Europe, may defy all foreign aggression. Her people are all citizens trained to arms, and enthusiastic in the cause of their fatherland. Her sandy plains and barren wastes have been reclaimed, and comfort and wealth have been generally diffused throughout the community.

Here, then, we have examples worthy of our imitation. Our chief peril arises from the want of citizens. We have few who are so firmly attached to the country, so intimately identified with property, so devoted to its institutions, that they may be safely relied upon as a sure protection in time of need.

Our policy should be to increase the numbers of this class, and to encourage our citizens. This work might be accomplished in Ireland without any great convulsion or extraordinary sacrifice. Our present social structure is well calculated to ensure the happy-

ness and prosperity of our people. In fact, no better social arrangement could be devised than that of an educated and refined aristocracy, possessed of capital, and resident on their estates, who, by their example and presence, might encourage and guide an industrious middle class of cultivators settled in the land and occupying the soil. Any measure which might induce a radical change in this social structure would probably be productive of serious evils to the community. Thus the sudden elevation of Irish tenants-at-will, with their present innate habits of listlessness and improvidence, to the rank of proprietors, would ultimately cause their ruin. When all restraint had been removed, they would subdivide lands, extract a niggard return from the half-tilled soil, and lapse into that love of bodily ease and sensual enjoyment which is characteristic of a half-civilized race.

We have already a proof of this in the case of the leaseholders under the old system, which did not require or enforce any conditions of improvement. They were, generally speaking, a worthless and unimproving race. And, therefore, we shall find it necessary, even in granting tenures, especially to the small occupiers of land, to insist either that the capital should be first expended and improvements made, or that the tenant will give ample security for the due fulfilment of this part of his contract.

The principle, then, which I would adopt, and which I have found to be already productive of good results in the case of a Celtic population, is this. Without raising the minds of a people by the promulgation of Utopian schemes, I would simply look forward to a modification of our present system, which would tend ultimately to abolish the uncertain condition of tenancy-at-will, and to substitute customary tenures and certain contract of occupation. For it is evident that where tenancy-at-will exists, there can be no works of permanent improvement. The proper savings bank of an agricultural community is the land. And it is a manifest sign of the insecurity of our social state, when (as was shown in the late famine) the banks are filled with the hoards of the poor, while the land is uncultivated and unstocked.

But in order to hold out an inducement to the people to invest their capital in the land, it would be reasonable to secure to them, by a tenure, the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. And in order to insure their progress, and to encourage further exertion, I would not grant leases indiscriminately, but only to those who could prove, by their actions and by work actually done, that they were actuated by a spirit of improvement. Thus the possession of a lease would be at once an evidence and a guarantee that the indi-

vidual had expended his labour and capital, and would in future be a useful member of the community.

If we suppose, then, that such an inducement as a lease, for a term of not less than thirty years, on liberal conditions, be held out to all the occupiers of land in Ireland ; if, stimulated by this concession, the people should settle down, and invest all their capital in the soil ; if thus they might gradually be inoculated with those steady habits which the acquisition of property entails, and become firmly attached to their country, I see no reason to doubt their ultimate happiness and natural advancement. For then, when they are elevated to an independent position, they will be influenced by all the appliances of our Christian civilization. It is surprising how little the value of a settled permanent home is understood, even by those who are deeply interested in the welfare of our people. People imagine that they will reclaim a population, and rescue them from habits of sensuality and improvidence, while they leave them in a condition in which, subject to a precarious and migratory existence, they can be little influenced by any permanent measures of reform. In a word, they do not build up the homes, and therefore the church and the school are neglected. They fondly believe, that by lectures, and tracts, and essays on drunkenness, and honesty, and the observance of the sabbath, they can lead those into

the paths of virtue, who, compelled by the exigencies of their condition, are continually shifting from place to place, and breaking up old ties and old local associations. A nomad population like a horde of Arabs, can never be imbued with steady habits of order, temperance, and self-denial. The curse of Reuben hangs over them : “Unstable as water, they cannot excel.” How can the minister of the Gospel, or the teacher, acquire an influence over those who are not localized, confined within the bounds of a parish, and ignorant of the wholesome restraints of a home and neighbourhood ? There is nothing to seize, nothing to act upon. Where the hearth is cold, and the small centres of domestic happiness and social virtue do not exist, the improvement of a people is wellnigh impossible. Weigh the matter well, ye apostles of social reform. Your labours would be more effectual if, instead of merely circulating barren treatises, you laboured more to bring the people within the pale of civilization ; and when they are there, gathered in from outlying districts, from dark lodging-houses, and bothies, and stifling garrets and cells ; when, bound by social ties, and conscious of an independent position, they are fit recipients for a civilization based on Christianity ; when the soil is thus prepared, then you may freely cast in the seed, secure that ultimately there will be an abundant harvest.

I would look forward to a state of things in which tenures and customary occupation should supersede tenancy at will. If this principle be once established, the question of tenant-right would be less complicated, inasmuch as a bill could only take cognizance of those permanent improvements which are unexhausted at the end of the term. The occupier could not expect compensation for work of which he himself, during his tenure, had fully enjoyed the benefit. A fair tenant-right bill would not only be a boon to the occupier by giving him security for his capital expended on the land, but also to the landlord, as the marketable value of their estates would be increased, and a certain guarantee given that rents would be punctually paid. This guarantee can never exist where the tenant has no capital, and depends only on the year's revenue as his sole resource.

Many would prefer a system which has prevailed in England, that the landlord himself should make improvements, and charge the cost to the occupier in the shape of an increased rent. In this case the tenant merely works the land, and the proprietor supplies the buildings and necessary machinery. I confess I do not much admire this system. If we regard merely the possible economy and the more finished execution of the work, and set aside the advantages of training up the people themselves to persevering industry, by

encouraging them to invest their capital in permanent improvements ; if we look on them as machines, and consider the development of their reasoning powers and habits of energy and foresight as a matter of slight importance, then we will advocate a system which does everything for them, but nothing by them, and which would tend always to restrict them in a state of pupillage. I would prefer to see a work not perhaps quite so elaborately finished, which yet gave evidence of the inventive genius, the enterprise and forethought of the tenant himself, than to behold a series of model farms and model cottages, built by contract, according to an unvaried plan. Landlords, especially in Ireland, often complain that their model erections are not appreciated or well taken care of by the tenant. The fact is, that people will generally preserve that on which they have expended their own capital and toil ; but they do not take the same interest in the works of others. If we want merely a land well drained and cultivated studded over with vast buildings and model farms, then let us borrow the capital and do it ourselves. But if we really desire (and this should be our first object) to educate our people, to make them independent and self-reliant, we must offer them the security, and then leave them to work out their prosperity by their own resources. The sooner we

understand the value of this practical education the better. The farmer who merely takes the land, and uses the machinery without investing any capital therein, has nothing but a fugitive interest in the country, and it is a matter of the highest importance (on which our future safety may depend) that the Irish people should be attached to the state, and closely connected with their native land.

The result of the high-farming system has generally been to extirpate gradually the race of small cultivators. The tendency of capital, like quicksilver, is to run into masses. A large work can be done cheaper in proportion than a small one, and a great farm is more economical than several detached holdings. We find therefore that after some time under the operation of this system the villages and small holdings disappear, and the rural population of independent landholders, unable to contend with the overpowering resources of the capitalist, is drafted into the towns, and swells the mass of our urban population. This is a certain detriment to the state, as it diminishes the number of the citizens. It is not wealth alone, but the general diffusion of it throughout the community, which is the basis of national strength, and the best guarantee of national safety. Without entering into the whole question as to the relative merits of large and small farms, it does appear that in like manner as different

grades exist in society, so it would seem that an admixture of farms of different sizes, suitable to the resources of the small as well as the large capitalist, is best calculated to stimulate the energies of all, and to develop the productive resources of the country. A prejudice has existed against small farms, and the ill cultivated and neglected holdings of the Irish peasantry have often been adduced as examples of the bad effects resulting from the occupation of land by indigent and thriftless cultivators. But no real argument can be derived from the anomalous state of things which has long existed in Ireland and the north of Scotland. How different the case might be if the people had been inoculated with the spirit and enterprize of those who have a hope in the future, and a certain interest in the land. On the continent of Europe, small farming is the rule, large farming the exception. And where will you find land better cultivated than in the Emmenthal, along the lakes of Thun, and Zurich, or in the Val di Nievole? The barren sands of Belgium have been fertilized by a race of small farmers. But they owned an interest in the soil, and had a secure investment for their capital. Give the Irish the same advantage, place them in the same position, and we shall then know, when the trial is made, whether the fault lies with the system or with the people. But until that experiment has been tried, it is folly to draw

the same conclusion from premises totally different, and to argue the incapacity of the Irish, because in Ireland the peasant, without a tenure or capital, does not give the same proofs of industry as the landholder in Switzerland or Belgium, who has inherited the small estate of his ancestors, transmitted through successive generations.

It has been long a matter of reproach to us, that the Irish are the worst-lodged peasantry in Europe. This stigma should be removed. The want of proper house accommodation has undoubtedly tended to demoralize the people. For although God's sovereign grace is not limited by the accidents of condition or place, yet, humanly speaking, a high tone of morality and intellectual development cannot consist with the cheerless abodes of abject poverty.

It is impossible that those who inhabit filthy, dark, ill-ventilated cottages, can cultivate habits of decency, order, and cleanliness. Those who associate with animals, will partake somewhat of their nature. Seldom does the higher existence subdue, and elevate the lower; but often has the civilized man degenerated into the savage. The children of men, as of old, will corrupt the sons of God. Therefore, if we would rescue the people from degradation, and purify their hearts, one great step must be, to purify their homes. Their houses should be substantial, well

built, free from the impurities of stagnant pools and manure heaps, which have been a fertile source of contagion. A barn and cattle shed should be attached to the dwelling, and a small yard apart, where the refuse and manure might be collected. Above all, let the home of the family be properly ventilated, and well lighted, with windows so placed as to admit the cheerful beams of the sun. For the sunlight is a source of life, and health, and happiness to all created things. Without it the natural development is imperfect, and the physical growth immature. Perhaps the inexplicable phenomena of cretinism and idiocy which prevail among the valleys of Switzerland and in the cabins of Ireland, and which always co-exist with an imperfect organization, may be partly attributed to the want of light. The plant and flower, as well as the animal, must be developed by the centre of life and heat. Light we want in Ireland, light, moral, intellectual, and physical, the beams of the Gospel in our hearts, the sunshine in our homes. Pour it in, let the dayspring be shed abroad. There will be hope for Ireland, when her people shall echo the cry of the Grecian hero,—

“ Δοξ μοι ιδεοθάι, εν δε φας τι οχεσσι.”

“ Slay us not in darkness, ere the light of Heaven has dawned on our hearts.”

Having now considered what is essential to the physical comforts and the general wellbeing of the people, let us say a few words on the subject of national education. It seems to be the duty of the legislator to provide a proper system of education, so that the means of moral and intellectual culture may be accessible to all. This can be done by a strict adherence to the principles of Christianity, by adopting a line of policy consistent with the precepts of the Gospel, by supporting a faithful ministry, and by diffusing everywhere the seeds of a true religion, which will bring forth the fruits of righteousness and peace. Thus shall we educate a people, and fit them for a higher destiny. As regards schools, I think it desirable that a system should be strictly maintained, under which the children of all denominations might be instructed in the elements of learning and the general principles of morality. The state having provided for the spiritual wants of the parents, might devolve upon them and on their clergy the training up of their children in religious habits. And, therefore, without insisting upon any particular form of religious teaching, it might be sufficient to grant assistance from the state funds to all schools where the children had been instructed in the general principles of learning, and trained in habits of morality, so as to secure that they should be hereafter useful and up-

right citizens. A separate system would, under existing circumstances, be most prejudicial to our future interests, as it would tend to alienate still more those who have long been opposed to widen the breach, and to divide the people again into two hostile camps, where political rancour and party feeling would obliterate the sympathy and kindness arising from old associations, and thus perpetuate the evils which have long wasted our land.

I have now traced out the outlines of that policy which I think we ought to adopt towards the Irish people. In a word, we must give them a home and an interest in the country, stimulate their industry, quicken their dormant energies, and develop the resources of the land by first developing the intelligence and the natural powers of its inhabitants. We must make them capitalists, and elevate them to the grade of citizens. And let us not be deceived: less than this will not do. By no other policy can we insure the prosperity of the land, and our own future security. Ireland has been ruled long enough ; it is now time to govern her. I write under the influence of solemn convictions with which I have long been impressed, of forebodings which may yet be realized. A time of trial is approaching a crisis in our history. We know not what a day may bring forth. Let us then look well to our bulwarks, to the

basis on which our security rests. If the invader should threaten our shores, are we prepared to meet him? Can we arm our people, can we present a united front, a firm phalanx of citizens, loyal and determined, ready to defend their homes and the institutions of their country? The answer is easy. If the "homes" do really exist throughout our land; if the people are taken into partnership, and associated with us in the property of the country; if they possess capital and an interest in the state, then we need not fear the results. There will be men to meet the emissaries of the despot, and Spartans to stand in the straits of Thermopylæ. But if our policy has hitherto been to resist all just claims, and to retain the people in a precarious condition; if we have practically obstructed their progress, denied them security, and thus relegated them to the condition of the proletarian class, instead of elevating them to the rank of citizens, then let us not cherish false hopes: we are defenceless, destitute of all which constitutes the real strength of a nation. That strength consists only in the great conservative body of citizens, and they only can be entrusted with the defence of a country who have a settlement and an abiding interest therein. When the cry, "pro aris et focis" is raised, it will be echoed only by those who are freemen; freemen not by virtue of suffrage bills

and acts of Parliament, but as holding an independent stake in their country, as forming an integral portion of the community, as possessed of a certain guarantee in the present, and a certain hope in the future. Let us reflect seriously on these things. If we now inaugurate a policy which will conciliate the affections of the people, and unite all by a common bond of union, we shall secure the safety of the commonwealth ; if not, we cannot expect to escape the penalty which a suicidal policy entails. While we have time, let us work. It is useless, when the foe is at our doors, to reiterate the prophecies of Cassandra. Before the trial comes, we must be prepared to meet the issue, otherwise we may find, when too late, that we have neglected the true path of safety, and sacrificed our dearest interest on the altar of a selfish and shortsighted expediency.

## CONCLUSION.

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MY task is ended. The principles laid down in the foregoing letters I have already tested by experience, and have reason to believe that they are sound. I have proved that the occupiers of land, when stimulated by the expectation of a tenure, have expended their labour and capital in the improvement of their farms. Their comforts have increased, they have appreciated the natural requirements of civilized life, and have created for themselves a home. I consider that every man who is connected with property, and has invested capital in the country, has thereby given to the state a guarantee, a direct pledge of his loyalty ; and on the other hand, those who want for this qualification cannot faithfully perform the duties, or share in the responsibilities of citizens. For loyalty in this

practical age does not signify a blind adherence to some abstract idea, or devotion to an individual, or to a dynasty. Men do not now contend for words, and swords do not spring from the scabbards at the call of king or kaiser. But they alone will be loyal who have a direct interest in the welfare of their country, who occupy its soil, and are attached to the institutions which secure to them the enjoyment of those blessings, without which their existence would be valueless.

It seems to me, that in our dealings with our people, we have been neglectful of these two great truths; first, that it is essential for the safety of the state that the number of its citizens should be maintained ; and secondly, that they alone can be called citizens, and are conservators of our institutions, who possess some permanent basis of loyalty. Thus we have regarded with indifference the undue preponderance of the proletarian classes ; of those who, destitute of capital, are dependent on some precarious source of livelihood, and cannot have any security or definite hope in the future. And yet, without this security and hope, civilization can scarcely exist ; and the people who are deprived of their essential blessings, must exhibit many of the characteristics of barbarism. They will be unsettled in their habits, improvident, sensual, and ill-affected. And notwithstanding all this, which the experience of every age has confirmed, we have witnessed with

apathy the gradual extinction of the independent land-holders in many parts of the kingdom, the depopulating of the rural districts, and the consequent increase of an urban population. I own, I dread more than any foreign aggression, this tendency to degrade the masses of our people, to cast them loose on the soil, to alienate them from property, and thus stereotype proletarianism in our land. There is much to indicate that we are approaching to a state of things which in former times foreboded the decline of imperial Rome. We are entering on a new era, a new phase in our national existence. The wealth formerly diffused throughout the community, is now concentrated in masses in the hands of a few capitalists. The bulk of our population, whether as operatives, citizens, or farm labourers, are chiefly dependent on the wages of their daily labour for support. They have little fixed capital which they can call their own, and no lasting resources. The great want experienced by this class arises chiefly from this, that they have no savings bank, no profitable investment for their capital. The small holdings have been merged in monster farms, the great factories have replaced the petty dealers and handicraftsmen, and men lose their individuality, and become assimilated to the machine with which they are connected. Thus the people are actually chained to dependence ; they cannot break forth from the

charmed circle, and they are precluded by the inevitable circumstances of their condition from accumulating wealth, and thus becoming real citizens in the land. For, let us understand the matter well ; it concerns us more nearly than we care perhaps to admit. It is downright folly to imagine that we can elevate the masses by giving them a franchise, unless with the independence they possess the qualification of citizenship. They alone are entitled to rank as citizens who possess a certain capital, either by their education, their scientific skill, or by their material wealth, the product of their labour, or the heritage transmitted by past generations. Nothing else will do ; and no acts of parliament or reform bills will make those free and independent members of the commonwealth, who have not the real guarantees on which freedom is based. If we retain the people in this dependent condition, and then lower the franchise, we entrust a power to them which they are unfit to exercise with discretion. We do not make them citizens, but we give the rights, and withhold the qualification. No man ought to exercise political power in a state who is not a citizen ; and no man is a citizen who does not own a stake and a permanent interest in that state. If we understand this, we will direct our efforts to elevate our people to the franchise, instead of lowering the franchise to the people, and inaugurate

a policy which will augment our proprietary classes, and favour the diffusion of capital throughout the community. Hitherto our policy has been the reverse. We have favoured the large capitalist at the expense of the small, and encouraged a system which, during the last half century, has silently operated to reduce our people to one dead level, to a monotonous and uncertain existence. Can any statesman of our age, looking on the present state of society, on the enormous wealth possessed by the few, and the dependent, almost servile condition of the many ; can any one who looks beneath the surface at the masses toiling, struggling on from year to year, without any capital or resources (except their own strength and aptitude for labour), venture to read the signs of the times, or to predict the future of England ? A social system which rests on a basis so narrow, which is unsupported by the bulk of the people, may suddenly collapse, and entail inevitable ruin. The volcano may burst, the lava flood may pour forth over the smiling plains. While millions are dependent on their daily hire, while the failure of a crop, or a defalcation in the supply of cotton, may utterly ruin those who are devoid of ulterior resources, our empire is insecure ; there is but six months between us and anarchy and revolution. That social fabric alone can stand where the majority are directly

interested in its preservation. If the people are gradually alienated from the property of the state, they will at last overturn the altar and the throne. Consider this, ye who try to subvert the pyramid, and place it on its apex ; ye who, neglecting the bases of national existence, would prop up your system by small palliatives, by your eleemosynary institutions, your temperance clubs, and lodging houses, and reading rooms, and debating societies, all very good in their way, but all very inferior to the original patriarchal institution, established by the Founder of all society—"the home." Establish this throughout the land, and all our other institutions are secure. Destroy this, and despite your philanthropic schemes and nostrums, you will entail a serious injury, perhaps the ruin of your country. Let England beware of the dogmas of those who would alienate her people, and stereotype proletarianism on her soil. It is a dangerous sign when our eleemosynary societies are being multiplied, owing to a felt necessity ; a sign that our people are not self-reliant, that they have not sufficient resources, but require bandages and leading strings. It is a dangerous thing when their sense of independence is blunted, their sensual desires inflamed, and the reckless and improvident have learned to call, like the Roman populace, for "panem et circenses."

When it comes to this, let England look to her safety. For as it was with Carthage, the great commercial empire, as it was with Rome the great military power of antiquity, so it may be with her. She too may perish, sacrificed to a suicidal policy, which dissevered the bond of union between her and her people, and deprived them of all real interest in the commonwealth.

These considerations urge us to attach great importance to the solution of that problem which is yet undetermined in Ireland, namely, whether the people shall be left in a state of dependence and insecurity, or naturalized in the country, and admitted as citizens to a participation in the property derived from the soil. If they are now thus established, and permitted to realize capital, and to acquire a basis of independence and national existence, I would confidently expect that Ireland will ultimately become the support, instead of the weakness, of the Empire. If this great question remains unsolved, and the future of our people is still undecided ; if generations are destined to pass away without any certain hope or definite nationality, then I can discern no pillar of light, no beacon to guide our steps ; I can augur nothing permanent or stable from a social system without guarantees, but must believe that the future, as the past history of Ireland, will present, like her climate, alternations of cloud and sunshine, of storm and calm ; a political

horizon chequered by the evanescent gleams of genius, the shortlived brilliancy of a vague and misdirected patriotism.

Being then convinced of the permanent importance of the great social problem on which our national existence depends, and of the necessity which should urge us to establish the people, first, by giving them a location and a home, without which they cannot be citizens ; knowing also that all minor and unimportant considerations should be postponed until the vital question is settled, what shall we say of those psuedo-patriots, who, inflated with petty vanity, declaim at banquets and hustings, and endeavour, by bringing forward topics of slight moment, to divert the people from the consideration of those things which are absolutely essential ; what shall we say of men who arrogantly claim to guide the destinies of a people, and yet place their hopes of national regeneration in such trifling matters as a repeal of the union, vote by ballot, universal suffrage, reform, etc ? If all those things were granted to-morrow, we should not have made one step towards true nationality. A real independent national existence can only be achieved when the people themselves learn to be self-reliant ; when all classes understand their duties, and are prepared to practise them. What have all these mere gewgaws to do with the real life of a nation ? Those

patriots, like the Feegee islanders, would decorate a man with a cocked hat before he has got a pair of breeches. Fortunately the Irish are beginning to understand the real value of these oratorical flourishes. The idea of repeal is wellnigh extinct, and exists only in the mind of some descendant of Brian Boru, who seems to imagine that the Brehon law was superior to our institutions, and that a society of savage chieftains and ragged kerne is infinitely preferable to our modern civilization. “Vote by ballot” is now the favourite political stalking-horse. Do the Irish understand the significance of this term? It simply means this, that while a system exists under which the voter is subject to indirect influence, and liable to be acted upon by terror or cajolery, he is practically not a freeman, and therefore claims the protection accorded to slaves. Instead of recording openly and honestly, before the public bar of his country, his free unbiassed opinion, he must slink from the ordeal, and give a silent and secret vote. Why should a man who is really independent disguise his opinions? Secrecy is, and always will be, the badge of servitude. And they who advocate “vote by ballot,” must look forward only to a perpetuation of that slavery which has hitherto enthralled the Irishman. No: such measures are unworthy of true statesmen,—worthy only of

empty pedants and demagogues. We have had enough of secrecy and under-hand dealing in Ireland. Sincerity, openness, honesty, these are what we want. Give the Irishman a secure basis of freedom, make him independent, educate his moral and mental powers, release him from thralldom, and then let him, when possessed of the qualification, exercise the rights of a citizen, and pronounce his matured opinions openly upon those questions which affect the interests of his country. Then will he understand the nature of true freedom, and exercise his authority as an intelligent and unbiassed member of the community.

Another favourite topic with our patriots is an unqualified abuse of England, and of Saxon institutions. If anything happens wrong in Ireland it is immediately attributed to the baneful influence of the Saxon. Defects which arise from our own internal mismanagement, evils caused by the sloth or improvidence of our people, are all traced to one fruitful source,—the tyranny of England. Such folly might excite our mirth, but the subject is too serious for jesting. Let me ask them in sober earnestness, what has England to do with evils which evidently arise from our own deficiencies, and faults in our social system, from the neglect of landed proprietors, or the ignorance and want of energy in our people? How is the Saxon to

blame, if the lands ill cultivated yield a poor return ; if houses badly built tumble down ; if outrages are committed because old enmities are still kept up by party badges and party tunes ; if trade languishes for want of strict honesty and carefulness in our dealings ? If England is made responsible for all the shortcomings of the Celt, she will have enough to bear. Even the visitation of the famine cannot be attributed to any sinister influences or political misgovernment. The causes of that evil may be distinctly defined, graven as if upon a rock. It resulted from the simple fact, that a people, destitute of capital and ulterior resources, in consequence of the selfishness of their former rulers, were ruined when their scanty pittance, the year's revenue, failed. England had nothing to do with the matter, nor with the extermination of the peasantry, or with the frequent evictions which drove the people from our shores. But when the cry of suffering arose from the desolate homes of Ireland, and the famine-stricken wilds of Connemara, she nobly responded to the call, and poured forth her wealth to stay the progress of an unforeseen calamity. Let us put the saddle on the right horse, and cease those unmanly complaints, worthy only of those who can discern nothing but their own selfish and puerile interests. England can do nothing for us which we cannot do for ourselves.

Formerly there were just grounds for complaint, but they do not exist now. The Irishman—witness our Lawrences and M'Clintocks—can and does rise to eminence and wealth equally with the shrewd intelligent Scotchman, or the persevering Saxon, provided he evinces those qualities which alone can ensure success. It is our fault if we do not attain to social prosperity. Only let us understand our duties and responsibilities. It will not do to sit idle in the mud and call to Jupiter to help us. “Aide toi et Dieu t'aidera.” We must put our own shoulders to the wheel. If we expect others to help us, we will wait long enough ; every one has enough to do to mind himself in the present age.

“Rusticus expectat dum defluit amnis, at ille  
Labitur et labeter in omne volubilis œvum.”

While we delay on the brink and dilate on imaginary grievances, and conjure up old wrongs, time rolls on, generations pass away, and the great problem of an existence remains unsolved. Let all recognize and fulfil their relative duties ; let our higher classes exhibit an example of liberality, of justice, and Christian forbearance ; let our people be educated, and then with minds informed and powers developed, let them go forth over our land, and forward the work of improve-

ment. Then, in spite of croakers, and mob orators, and inflated patriots (mere windbags), Ireland will improve ; then will her wastes be reclaimed, her resources developed, and she will enter on the true path to prosperity.

We should not be led astray by false titles and high-sounding names. "All is not gold that glitters." There is a conservatism (falsely so called) which may conduct to national degradation and ruin. There is a liberalism which tends only to preserve intact the great original bases of nationality, and to sweep away the parasitical growth and excrescences which deform the social fabric. It is no conservatism which would maintain old abuses, exclusive privileges, and the relics of an effete civilization. It is no radicalism which, while it preserves the gradations of rank, would yet endeavour to secure to all those benefits and equality of freedom, which Christianity and a sound policy imperatively demands. Often has the world beheld the characters of her best and wisest vilified and distorted through a false medium. It was her conservative party, her patricians and wealthy nobility, who ruined Rome. The Gracchi would have preserved her. Call not that conservatism which would maintain old traditions and obsolete distinctions ; which preserves intact the line of

demarcation between the classes, and shudders at the slightest infringement of the rights of property, while it does not enforce the duties consequent on those rights. But call that conservatism and true statesmanship, which, acting accordant with the fundamental principles laid down by the Great Author of society, will provide for the improvement and happiness of every individual in the community ; which follows no visionary theories, and recognizes no irresponsible authority, but calls on all to perform their duties in their station in life ; which derives its vitality from the Christianity promulgated in the Gospel ; from that faith which during ages has never faltered in its onward course ; has never despaired of the regeneration of fallen man ; but still amidst the storm and surge of contending nations, presses onwards with its standard " *Excelsior*," its watchword " *vestigia nulla retrorsum*," until this dynasty has passed away, and a new era of righteousness and peace dawns upon the world.